1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

Melgars people could hold the office of *wursol*, but had no *wursulir* themselves. At the present time the majority of men who hold this office are drawn from the Teivaliol, only two belonging to Melgars, and it seemed that it was only when the supply ran short among the Teivaliol that the Tarthar people had recourse to members of their own division. The Melgarsol do not share fully the privileges of the Teivaliol in respect of this office, for though they may perform the ordinary work of the dairy, there are certain duties of the *wursol*, such as those at the funeral ceremonies, which may only be performed by a Teivali occupant of the office.

The *wursol* has to go through more complicated ordination ceremonies than the *palikartmokh*, and has a distinctly higher degree of sanctity so far as one can judge from the rules for his conduct. He may not be touched by any ordinary person, and in general the rules regulating his conduct are more stringent than those for the ordinary dairyman.

The *wursol* has two dresses; one, the grey garment called *tuni*, which is worn at his dairy work and kept in the dairy; the other, the ordinary *putkuli*, which he wears when not engaged at his special work.

The *wursol* does not sleep in his own dairy, but in one of a different kind, a village which has a *wursuli* always having at least one other dairy. At Kars he sleeps in the *kudrpali*, and at Nòdrs in the *tarvali*. He is allowed to sleep in the hut of a Tarthar village on two nights in the week—viz., Sunday and Wednesday—and on these occasions he may have intercourse with any Tarthar woman. Except on these occasions he loses his office even if touched by a woman. He is not allowed to have intercourse with any Teivali woman, even with his wife if he is married, on pain of becoming an ordinary person.

He may go to any Tarthar village, but to no Teivali village—*i.e.*, if one of the Teivaliol, he is allowed to visit none of his own people.

When he goes to the dwelling-hut, care is taken to remove from the hut the objects shown in Fig. 11—viz., the *murn* or sieve, the *wask* or pounder, and the *kip* or broom. It seems

There is a legend that the original buffaloes of this herd

173 were sent from Amnòdr[1] by the god On to the people of Taradr.
234 A long time after they came to Taradr the herd was on the
462 point of dying out, only one cow buffalo remaining, which
793 was so old that it had lost its teeth. This sole survivor was pregnant, and when about to calve the delivery was much delayed, and it seemed that the buffalo would die before the calf was born. Only women were present and they cut open the belly of the buffalo and took out the calf, which was tended very carefully and lived, and the existing *kugvalir* are descended from this calf.

This story preserves a tradition of the practice of women attending to the buffaloes at the time of calving, which is said to have been at one time the regular practice.

292 The *kugvalikartmokh* sleeps in the *kwotars* or calf-house,
513 except at Taradr, at which place he sleeps in the outer room
784 of his dairy. He is allowed to sleep in the ordinary hut on
793 certain nights in the week, and may only have intercourse with Tarthar women.

●834 He wears the grey garment, or *tuni*, which he ties round his waist when churning and wears over his shoulders when milking.

234 The work of the dairy is carried out on the same general
788 lines as that already described, but with certain distinguishing features.

All the work is done *kabkaditi*; the dairyman never turns his back to the contents of the dairy. In those villages in which he sleeps in the calf-house he goes naked (except for the *kuvn*) to the *kugvali*, washes his hands, prostrates himself at the threshold, enters, and puts on his *tuni* which is kept on the *patatmar*. He salutes the *mani*, which he feeds with curd and milk as in other dairies. He also knocks on the *patat* three times, saying "*On*" each time.

234 As in the other village dairies, he only prays and lights the
415 lamp in the evening. When he gives out buttermilk, he
788 must use the vessel called *pòlmachok*. He drinks buttermilk (*peputi*) in a distinctly more ceremonial manner than in the ordinary dairy, sitting on the seat (*kwottiin*) outside the dairy, and pouring from the *ertatpun* into a leaf-cup made of two

[1] The world of the dead.

1 [The Kugvalir -- Analyst]

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

apparent in the shaken and decrepit appearance which at the present day these tribes possess." Fact it undoubtedly is, and proved both by hospital and naked-eye evidence, that syphilis has been introduced among the Todas by contact with the outside world, and they attribute the stunted growth of some members of the rising generation, as compared with the splendid physique of the lusty veterans, to the results thereof. It is an oft-repeated statement that the women show an absence of any sense of decency in exposing their naked persons in the presence of strangers. In connection with the question of the morality of the Toda women, Dr. Rivers writes that "the low sexual morality of the Todas is not limited in its scope to the relations within the Toda community. Conflicting views are held by those who know the Nilgiri hills as to the relations of the Todas with the other inhabitants, and especially with the train of natives which the European immigration to the hills has brought in its wake. The general opinion on the hills is that, in this respect, the morality of the Todas is as low as it well could be, but it is a question whether this opinion is not too much based on the behaviour of the inhabitants of one or two villages [*e.g.*, the one commonly known as School or Sylk's mand] near the European settlements, and I think it is probable that the larger part of the Todas remain more uncontaminated than is generally supposed."

I came across one Toda who, with several other members of the tribe, was selected on account of fine physique for exhibition at Barnum's show in Europe, America and Australia some years ago, and still retained a smattering of English, talking fondly of 'Shumbu' (the elephant Jumbo). For some time after his return to his hill abode, a tall white hat was the admiration of his fellow Tribesmen.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

sacred rivers in general, nor climb holy hillocks upon which gods are supposed to live. They are not entitled to practise sorcery (I never came across a case of them doing so), to eat parts of the sacrificed calf of the *erkumpṭthpimi* ceremony (Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 274), to approach the spot where buffaloes are killed at funerals (for fear that they should see the bell of the temple upon which they are not allowed to set eyes), to attend the ceremony of offering a buffalo calf to a *ti-mad* called *irnörtit* (op. cit. p. 293); Teivilkh women are, besides, not permitted ever to visit the *mads* of the Tardharsh division.

The inferior status of women is further emphasized by sexual privileges connected with the office of the Teivilkh priests. Thus, the *tarvalikartmokh* has unrestricted access whenever he wishes to all women of the *mad* at which he is serving, even though these may be Tardharsh, that is, whom, normally, as members of the lower moiety, he may not approach. The *kurpalikartmokh* can sleep with the Tardharsh women of his choice, but only on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. The *wursol* may do the same on Sundays and Wednesdays only, and may not have any relations during the time that he is priest with any Teivilkh women, not even his wife if he is married. The *palol* of the *ti* may cohabit with the Tardharsh woman that he wants (from any *mad*) outside the precincts of the *ti-mad*, but within the sanctified territory, that is, in practice, in the *sholas* only (Rivers denies this, but I have confirmed it in *The Todas, Some Additions and Corrections to W. H. R. River's Book, Observed in the Field*, see Bibliography).

Todas prefer men to women to such a degree that female infanticide was, and is still to some extent, practised in the tribe, something to which we shall have occasion to revert further on. Toda society is a patriarchal one, in which the men are dominant and in which they treat their women, as most polyandrous people do, as their property. This belies the deceptive appearance of freedom which the females give on first acquaintance, an appearance which one very soon learns to appreciate at its true value when one gets to know the tribe better.

After adult marriage the bride always takes up her residence with her husband or husbands as the case may be, no known case of uxorilocal dwelling having ever taken place. She becomes a member of his or their *modol*, giving the latter a territorial appearance. At the same time she ceases to belong to her maiden one, but continues nevertheless to be part of her own *polkhliol*. Inheritance is always exclusively through the male line, the father's or fathers' brothers, the next of kin

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

had both received pieces of cloth from the cicisbeo of their wife.

So ingrained in Toda customs is the *mokhthoditi* institution that somebody who died without having either a *mokhthodvaiol* or a *sedvaitazmokh* would have to have one appointed after death so as to fill the place reserved for that person at the funeral rites. For cicisbei have an important function to fulfil on this occasion, and no ceremony would be complete without it. It is significant that a brother of the woman's husband is preferred in the case of such a posthumous appointment.

At the cremation of Ling Mish (23, called after Miss C. F. Ling!), a Tarar woman married to a man of the Norsh *modol*, on the 27th July, 1939, I saw her cicisbeo, a Teivilkh, come forward at the moment when her body had been prepared to be laid on the pyre, and insert with his left hand some limes, three handfuls of the grain which the Todas call *patcherski* (samai), jaggery, a piece of the dark *än* cloth, and the strings (*penor*) of his own *kuvn*, into the pocket of the deceased's *putkuli*. I was told that had she not had a lover, another man of the Teivilkh moiety would have been chosen to carry out this last rite it being essential to do so. Rivers says that the *mokhthodvaiol* should go to the funeral with his ring on the ring-finger of his left hand. He should make the *kalmelpudithi* salutation to the woman's father before the buffaloes have been caught, and afterwards insert the symbolic objects into his dead mistress's garment with his left hand – as if to mark that his relations with her were really *de la main gauche*. In the case of a man dying, exactly the same rites will be carried out by his *sedvaitazmokh*, except that she will not make obeisance to the man's father; her brothers will in her stead (see *The Todas*, p. 366).

The Todas always make a point of saying that they may not have any sexual relations, even clandestine, with non-Todas, and we have seen that a divorce from a woman can be sought for if she has been convicted of such an offence. It is, I was told, a particularly heinous crime for a Toda woman to have intercourse with someone not belonging to the tribe. In this way, we are led to believe, Toda racial stock has been kept "pure" throughout the centuries, and I have even heard it said by Indian physical anthropologists that the tribe is of a degenerate physical type, because there is too much intermarriage, and "the genes do not circulate enough".

And yet it seems that with the Muduga tribe of the Walluvanad taluk in Malabar there exists a definite institutionalised sexual relation based upon the hereditary friendship of some Todas with a few leading